

ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

AUGUST 2006

The Trends 100

Alaska's 100 largest private employers in 2005

WHAT'S INSIDE

Employment Scene

Seasonal employment picks up in June



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Frank H. Murkowski, Governor
Greg O'Claray, Commissioner**

ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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Cover: Katie Haussler and John Rigg, both registered nurses, work in the Adult Critical Care Unit at Providence Alaska Medical Center. The photograph was taken in November 2003.

Photo courtesy of Providence Alaska Medical Center

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Governor's Letter	3
The Trends 100	4
Alaska's 100 largest private employers in 2005	
Employment Scene	14
Seasonal employment picks up in June	
Profile	16
ALEXsys	



The Trends 100: Making the Cut for Who's Who in Business

By Governor Frank H. Murkowski

This month's *Trends* presents a report card of the top 100 private employers in Alaska. This report is always an interesting issue to read to see who the movers and shakers have been in Alaska business and industry over the past year. Learning who's made the cut, who's moved up, who's moved down and who's dropped off and the factors behind the moves is exciting. It's exciting because it illustrates activity and growth and captures the essence of folks going after the American dream of business success. We Alaskans certainly know how to roll up our sleeves and do whatever it takes to move forward and prosper.

Topping the list of go-getters for the fifth straight year is Providence Health System. Health care continues to be a high-growth industry, and Providence has found the right formula for growth without compromising the quality of care. We benefit from their success, receiving state-of-the-art medical services at facilities in Anchorage, Kodiak, Seward, Valdez and in the Mat-Su area.

The continued growth of Carrs/Safeway, Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart/Sam's Club could be seen as a reflection of the prosperity of our state as a whole. Considering that these entities provide basic everyday necessities – along with some essentials for enjoying Alaska's many recreational opportunities – their growth is a result of Alaskans doing well financially and spending their money accordingly. More jobs for Alaskans has resulted in more prosperity, and that trend will continue with more jobs coming with the gas pipeline and in high-growth industries such as mining, energy, construction and transportation.

Alaska's oil industry dominates the Trends 100 club. In 2005, the vast majority of oil industry workers in Alaska were employed by one of the state's largest employers. No other industry in the state had such a large concentration of big players. ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications and Udelhoven Oilfield System Services were among the big movers in 2005.

Another exciting aspect of the Trends 100 report is the wide distribution of the top 100 companies across the state. Although most of the top 100 have their headquarters or their largest work site in Anchorage, fewer than 15 of the employers are exclusively in Anchorage. At least a quarter of the top 100 have no presence in Anchorage. Growth and prosperity spread across the state is good for Alaskans.

And at the risk of bragging a little bit, many of our top 100 are also Fortune 500 employers. Those include UPS, Wells Fargo, Home Depot and Costco. We are proud to attract such well-known entities, and even prouder to provide them fertile ground for continued growth in our state.

Reading the Trends 100 is a little like watching a sporting event and cheering on your favorite team. Check out the list and see which businesses you support made the cut. And maybe pass along a word of "well done" to them on your next visit. After all, good service typically results in a growing business, so making this top 100 list is a result of them working hard for yours.

Alaska's 100 largest private employers in 2005

The Providence Health System has now topped the list of Alaska's 100 largest employers for five years. No other companies are close to the 3,685¹ employees Providence had in 2005 and it won't be a surprise when the health care company hits the 4,000 mark. Providence's work force had already reached 3,921 as of March 2006. Growth just keeps coming as the health care company adds new facilities to its main Anchorage campus and continues to expand geographically. Now Providence runs facilities in Kodiak, Seward, Valdez and in the Mat-Su area.

Carrs/Safeway remained solidly in the second spot. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.) Fred Meyer, in a surprise move, toppled Wal-Mart/Sam's Club from the third spot; it had 101 more employees in 2005 than Wal-Mart/Sam's Club. But the move could be short-lived. Wal-Mart has already broken ground on at least two "super center" stores and has plans for more over the next couple years.

The 1,000+ employee club grows by one – Wells Fargo

In 2005, 17 of Alaska's private businesses employed more than 1,000 workers – one more than in 2004 and five more than a decade ago. Wells Fargo grew to 1,018 employees in 2005, just making it into the over-1,000 club. The bank's climb wasn't a surprise considering it

was only 75 employees short of 1,000 in 2004. When it bought National Bank of Alaska in 2000, it went through a period of consolidation, but since then, its employment numbers have increased.

Four new arrivals in 2005

Each year the vast majority of the state's 100 largest employers don't change. Four new players made the list in 2005 – an unusually small group. (See Exhibit 3.) In most cases, the new players were close to making the list in 2004 and they simply grew enough to make the list. Holiday Stationstores, one of the state's largest gas station retailers, came on the scene when it bought Williams Alaska Petroleum in early 2004. By 2005 they had grown enough to make the Trends 100 list.

Doyon Drilling, a subsidiary of Doyon, Limited, a Native regional corporation, has graced the top 100 list in the past and added enough jobs in 2005 to make it back on the list. Overall oil industry employment began to rebound in 2005 and Doyon Drilling, along with numerous oil industry employers on the Trends 100 list, benefited from this broader growth.

The Harpoon Construction Group, a subsidiary of Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation, a Barrow Native village corporation, is an umbrella for four contractors: UIC Construction, Ukpik Mechanical, Nuvuk Construction and Rain Proof Roofing. The construction industry's continued growth has been a factor in Harpoon's growth: it added 60 employees in 2005. The company is only one of two construction companies on the

¹ Except where noted otherwise, each reference in this article to the number of employees a company has is the average monthly employment in 2005 for the company based on the quarterly employer reports of wages and employment that nearly all employers in the state submit to the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, as mandated by the state's unemployment insurance laws.

top 100 list. Crowley Marine, a marine transportation and logistics company, has hovered close to making the list for a number of years and finally made the grade in 2005 with 271 employees.

Four fall off Trends 100

Each new arrival on the Trends 100 list displaces an equal number of the previous year's employers. The four that fell off the list in 2005 were Petro Star, Northern Air Cargo, Blockbuster and Greens Creek Mining Company. There was no specific event that explains why they fell off the list; in all four cases the companies simply didn't have enough employment in 2005 to make the 271-employee cutoff. Jockeying at the bottom of the ranking takes place every year.

Six companies leapfrog 10 or more spots

Every year some dynamic employers leapfrog their earlier Trends 100 ranking by at least 10 spots over the previous year. (See Exhibit 4.) Some of them moved up the list because of aggressive growth; others merged or bought out existing businesses.

For example, Lowe's opened new stores in Fairbanks and Wasilla in 2004; its employment went up 198 between 2004 and 2005. Lithia Motors continues to acquire car dealerships around the state. Both ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications and Udelhoven Oilfield System Services benefited from the upsurge in oil industry activity. The former climbed by 25 rankings in a year; the latter climbed 17. ARAMARK gains have come from an expansion in the company's hotel properties and QAP, formerly Quality Asphalt Paving, also grew.

Trends 100 companies employ a third of Alaska's work force

Alaska's largest 100 companies in 2005 employed 69,281 people – nearly a third of all private-sector wage and salary employment. Their

payroll was \$3.1 billion in 2005, or 35 percent of all private sector payroll. Employment for the top 100 employers grew 3.3 percent in 2005, versus 2.5 percent for all private sector employment. The average annual earnings of the Trends 100 companies was \$45,111, compared to \$39,703 for the overall private sector. This earnings advantage can largely be explained by the strong presence of the high-wage oil industry. The average annual earnings among the top 100 oil industry employers was \$96,341; those companies represent 90 percent of all oil industry employment in the state.

The top 100 includes 17 Native-owned employers

There are 17 companies and organizations on the top 100 list in 2005 – one more than in 2004 – that are Native nonprofit organizations, subsidiaries of one of Alaska's 13 regional Native corporations, or, in one case, a subsidiary of a Native village corporation. (See Exhibit 5.) There are two new Native players: Doyon Drilling and Harpoon Construction. Petro Star, a subsidiary of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, fell off the list. Just a decade ago only 13 Native companies were on the Trends 100 list.

Native employers on the top 100 list in 2005 represented nearly a third of all private sector employers in the state with more than 1,000 employees, illustrating the growing significance of Native companies and nonprofit organizations as major employers. Because the Trends 100 list contains individual firms regardless of ownership, the role of regional Native corporations in Alaska's labor market is sometimes understated. If all the subsidiaries of the regional corporations were combined under one company's name, most of the parent corporations would show up on the top 100 list. Despite this definitional limitation, their representation is a sign of their growing significance.

The largest Native company in 2005 was ASRC Energy Services with 1,506 employees, making it the seventh-largest private sector employer

1 Alaska's 100 Largest Private Sector Employers

Employment in 2005

Rank	Firm Name	Average Monthly Employment in 2005	Business Activity	Headquarters or Largest Work Site	Web Site Address
1	Providence Health System	3,685	Hospital/medical center	Anchorage	providence.org/alaska
2	Carrs/Safeway	3,086	Grocery	Anchorage	safeway.com
3	Fred Meyer	2,795	Grocery/general merchandise	Anchorage	fredmeyerstores.com
4	Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	2,694	Grocery/general merchandise	Anchorage	walmartstores.com
5	Trident Seafoods	1,650	Seafood processing	Akutan	tridentseafoods.com
6	Alaska Airlines	1,515	Air carrier	Anchorage	alaskaair.com
7	ASRC Energy Services	1,506	Oil field services	Anchorage	asrcenergy.com
8	Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	1,372	Health care	Bethel	ykhc.org
9	NANA Management Services	1,358	Catering/lodging/security	Anchorage	nana.com
10	Banner Health (includes Fairbanks Memorial Hospital)	1,346	Hospital/medical center	Fairbanks	bannerhealth.com
11	BP	1,341	Oil and gas production	Anchorage	bp.com
12	GCI Communications	1,298	Communications	Anchorage	gci.com
13	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium ²	1,200	Hospital/medical center	Anchorage	anthc.org
14	VECO	1,157	Oil field services	Anchorage	veco.com
15	Southcentral Foundation ³	1,098	Health care	Anchorage	southcentralfoundation.com
16	FedEx	1,084	Airfreight/courier service	Anchorage	fedex.com
17	Wells Fargo	1,018	Financial services	Anchorage	wellsfargo.com
18	Alaska Communications Systems (ACS)	949	Communications	Anchorage	acsalaska.com
19	ConocoPhillips	936	Oil and gas production	Anchorage	conocophillips.com
20	Spenard Builders Supply	923	Building products	Anchorage	sbsalaska.com
21	Alaska USA Federal Credit Union	858	Financial services	Anchorage	alaskausa.org
22	Alyeska Pipeline Service Company	842	Pipeline transportation	Anchorage	alyeska-pipe.com
23	Alaska Regional Hospital	827	Hospital/medical center	Anchorage	alaskaregional.com
24	UniSea	819	Seafood processing	Dutch Harbor	unisea.com
25	SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC)	804	Social services/health care	Sitka	searhc.org
26	McDonald's Restaurants of Alaska	790	Eating establishment	Anchorage	mcdonalds.com
27	First National Bank Alaska	736	Financial services	Anchorage	fnbalaska.com
28	Costco	713	General merchandise/grocery	Anchorage	costco.com
29	Icicle Seafoods	688	Seafood processing	Petersburg	icicleseafoods.com
30	Doyon/Universal Ogden, Joint Venture	670	Catering/security	Anchorage	doyon.com
31	Westward Seafoods	665	Seafood processing	Unalaska	westwardseafoods.com
32	Alaska Commercial Company	656	General merchandise/grocery	Anchorage	alaskacommercial.com
33	Home Depot	641	Building products	Anchorage	homedepot.com
34	The Alaska Club	634 ¹	Health club	Anchorage	thealaskaclub.com
35	Job Ready	634 ¹	Vocational rehab services	Anchorage	readycareak.com
36	Hope Community Resources	634 ¹	Social services	Anchorage	hopealaska.org
37	ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications	617	Oil field services	Anchorage	asrcenergyservices.com
38	Northwest Airlines	568	Air carrier	Anchorage	nwa.com
39	Ocean Beauty Seafoods	567	Seafood processing	Kodiak	oceanbeauty.com
40	Peter Pan Seafoods	562	Seafood processing	King Cove	ppsf.com
41	Mat-Su Regional Medical Center	561	Hospital/medical center	Palmer	matsuregional.com
42	Lowe's	560	Building products	Anchorage	lowes.com
43	Tanana Chiefs Conference	559	Social services/health care	Fairbanks	tananachiefs.org
44	Maniilaq Association	557	Social services/health care	Kotzebue	maniilaq.org
45	ARAMARK	549	Catering/concessionaire	Denali Park	aramark.com
46	Anchorage Daily News	531	Newspaper	Anchorage	adn.com
47	Immediate Care	528	Health care	Anchorage	immediatcareak.com
48	Horizon Lines of Alaska	520	Water transportation	Anchorage	horizon-lines.com
49	Alaska Hotel Properties (Princess Hotels)	515	Hotels	Denali Park	princesslodges.com
50	Alyeska Resort (includes O'Malley's on the Green)	503	Hotel/resort	Girdwood/Anchorage	alyeskaresort.com

¹ When two or more employers had the same number of employees, they were ranked by unrounded employment.

² excludes its 697 federal employees

³ excludes its 111 federal employees

Alaska's 100 Largest Private Sector Employers

Employment in 2005



Rank	Firm Name	Average Monthly Employment in 2005	Business Activity	Headquarters or Largest Work Site	Web Site Address
51	Peak Oilfield Services Company	471	Oil field services	Anchorage	peakalaska.com
52	Norton Sound Health Corporation	458 ¹	Health care	Nome	nortonsoundhealth.org
53	PenAir	458 ¹	Air carrier	Anchorage	penair.com
54	Sears	457	General merchandise	Anchorage	sears.com
55	Chugach Development Corporation	451	Facilities support services	Anchorage	chugach-ak.com
56	Schlumberger Technologies	442 ¹	Oil field services	Anchorage	slb.com
57	Laidlaw Transit Services	442 ¹	School/charter bus company	Anchorage	laidlawtransit.com
58	UPS	437	Air freight/courier service	Anchorage	ups.com
59	Alaska Consumer Direct Personal Care ⁴	436	Home health	Anchorage	homehealthnursing.com
60	Fairbanks Gold Mining Company (Fort Knox)	423	Mining	Fairbanks	kinross.com
61	Pizza Hut	413	Eating establishment	Anchorage	pizzahut.com
62	Lithia Motors	408	Car dealership	Anchorage	lithia.com
63	Westmark Hotels	401 ¹	Hotels	Anchorage	westmarkhotels.com
64	Denali Foods (Taco Bell)	401 ¹	Eating establishment	Anchorage	tacobell.com
65	Era Aviation	396	Air carrier	Anchorage	flyera.com
66	Assets	391	Social services	Anchorage	assetsinc.org
67	Carlile Enterprises	382	Trucking/warehousing	Anchorage	carlilekw.com
68	Teck Cominco Alaska (Red Dog mine)	381 ¹	Mining	Red Dog Mine	teckcominco.com
69	QAP (formerly Quality Asphalt Paving)	381 ¹	Construction	Anchorage	qualityasphaltpaving.com
70	Tesoro Northstore Company	367	Retail/gas stations	Anchorage	tsocorp.com
71	Chugach Electric Association	366	Utility	Anchorage	chugachelectric.com
72	Royal Highway Tours (Princess Tours)	359	Tour buses	Anchorage	n/a
73	Nabors Alaska Drilling	357	Oil field services	Anchorage	nabors.com
74	Ketchikan General Hospital	350	Hospital/medical center	Ketchikan	peacehealth.org
75	North Pacific Seafoods	347 ¹	Seafood processing	Kodiak	northpacificseafoods.com
76	Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation	347 ¹	Health care	Dillingham	bbahc.org
77	Salvation Army-Alaska	345	Social services	Anchorage	salvationarmy.org/alaska
78	Hotel Captain Cook	340	Hotel	Anchorage	captaincook.com
79	SMG of Alaska (Sullivan Arena, others)	339	Facilities support services	Anchorage	smgworld.com
80	Access Alaska	338	Social services	Anchorage	accessalaska.org
81	Udelhoven Oilfield System Services	335	Oil field services	Anchorage	udelhoven.com
82	Hilton Anchorage	334	Hotel	Anchorage	hilton.com
83	NorQuest Seafoods	329	Seafood processing	Ketchikan	norquestseafoods.com
84	Nordstrom	322	Department store	Anchorage	nordstrom.com
85	Matanuska Telephone Association	318	Communications	Palmer	mta-telco.com
86	JCPenney	316	Apparel	Anchorage	jcpenny.net
87	Frontier Community Services	314	Social services	Soldotna	fcscenai.org
88	Rural Alaska Community Action Program	313	Social services	Anchorage	ruralcap.com
89	Union Oil of California (Unocal) (now Chevron)	311	Oil production	Anchorage	chevron.com
90	Alaska Sales and Service	309	Car dealership	Anchorage	alaskasalesandservice.com
91	Gottschalks	307	Apparel	Anchorage	gottschalks.com
92	The Arc of Anchorage	306	Social services	Anchorage	arc-anchorage.org
93	Swissport	299	Airport services	Anchorage	swissport.info
94	Holiday Stationstores	293	Retail/gas stations	Anchorage	holidaystationstores.com
95	Anchorage Cold Storage (Odom Corp.)	286	Wholesale	Anchorage	odomcorp.com
96	Doyon Drilling	282	Oil field services	Anchorage	doyondrilling.com
97	Harpoon Construction Group	281 ¹	Construction	Anchorage	harpoonconstruction.com
98	Northrim Bank	281 ¹	Financial services	Anchorage	northrim.com
99	Crowley Marine	271 ¹	Coastal freight transport	Anchorage	crowley.com
100	Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)	271 ¹	Social services	Bethel	avcp.org

¹ When two or more employers had the same number of employees, they were ranked by unrounded employment.

⁴ formerly Nightingale Nursing Services

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

2 Trends 100 by Industry

Employment in 2005

	Employment
NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING	
Mining (except oil and gas)	
Fairbanks Gold Mining Company (Fort Knox)	423
Teck Cominco Alaska (Red Dog mine)	381
Oil and Gas Extraction and Oil Field Services	
ASRC Energy Services	1,506
BP	1,341
VECO	1,157
ConocoPhillips	936
ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Comm.	617
Peak Oilfield Services Company	471
Schlumberger Technologies	442
Nabors Alaska Drilling	357
Udelhoven Oilfield System Services	335
Union Oil of California (Unocal) (now Chevron)	311
Doyon Drilling	282
CONSTRUCTION	
QAP (formerly Quality Asphalt Paving)	381
Harpoon Construction Group	281
MANUFACTURING	
Seafood Processing	
Trident Seafoods	1,650
UniSea	819
Icicle Seafoods	688
Westward Seafoods	665
Ocean Beauty Seafoods	567
Peter Pan Seafoods	562
North Pacific Seafoods	347
NorQuest Seafoods	329
TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES	
Wholesale	
Anchorage Cold Storage (Odom Corp.)	286
Retail	
Carrs/Safeway	3,086
Fred Meyer	2,795
Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	2,694
Spenard Builders Supply	923
Costco	713
Alaska Commerical Company	656
Home Depot	641
Lowe's	560
Sears	457
Lithia Motors	408
Tesoro Northstore Company	367
Nordstrom	322
JCPenney	316
Alaska Sales and Service	309
Gottschalks	307
Holiday Stationstores	293
Transportation	
Alaska Airlines	1,515
FedEx	1,084
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company	842
Northwest Airlines	568
Horizon Lines of Alaska	520
PenAir	458

	Employment
Transportation (continued)	
Laidlaw Transit Services	442
UPS	437
Era Aviation	396
Carlisle Enterprises	382
Royal Highway Tours (Princess Tours)	359
Swissport	299
Crowley Marine	271
Utilities	
Chugach Electric Association	366
INFORMATION	
Publishing	
Anchorage Daily News	531
Telecommunications	
GCI Communications	1,298
Alaska Communications Systems (ACS)	949
Matanuska Telephone Association	318
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	
Finance and Insurance	
Wells Fargo	1,018
Alaska USA Federal Credit Union	858
First National Bank Alaska	736
Northrim Bank	281
PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	
Administrative and Support Services	
Chugach Development Corporation	451
SMG of Alaska (Sullivan Arena, others)	339
EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES	
Health Services and Social Assistance	
Providence Health System	3,685
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	1,372
Banner Health (includes Fairbanks Memorial Hospital)	1,346
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	1,200
Southcentral Foundation	1,098
Alaska Regional Hospital	827
SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC)	804
Job Ready	634
Hope Community Resources	634
Mat-Su Regional Medical Center	561
Tanana Chiefs Conference	559
Maniilaq Association	557
Immediate Care	528
Norton Sound Health Corporation	458
Alaska Consumer Direct Personal Care (formerly Nightingale Nursing Services)	436
Assets	391
Ketchikan General Hospital	350
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation	347
Salvation Army-Alaska	345
Access Alaska	338
Frontier Community Services	314
Rural Alaska Community Action Program	313
The Arc of Anchorage	306
Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)	271

Continued on page 9

in the state. It supplanted the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, which was the largest Native employer in 2004. ASRC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

A number of the stars in 2005 were also tied to the oil industry. Other Native oil services companies include ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications; Peak Oilfield Services Company, which is partially owned by Cook Inlet Region Inc. – the Native regional corporation more commonly known as CIRI – and Doyon/Universal Ogden, Joint Venture; and Doyon Drilling, which, as mentioned earlier, is a subsidiary of Doyon, Limited, a Native regional corporation.

Seven of the employers on the top 100 list are Native health care providers. Two of the seven, Southcentral Foundation and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, also have a substantial number of federal employees who work directly for the organizations. For example, if the health consortium's 697 federal employees were included in the total, the organization would rank fifth on the Trends 100 list. Interestingly, Bethel, with a population of 5,960, was home base to the eighth-largest and the smallest players on the top 100 list – the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation and the Association of Village Council Presidents.

Other Native employers on the Trends 100 list include Maniilaq Association, a nonprofit social service corporation based in Kotzebue, and NANA Management Services, which is involved in a number of ventures, ranging from food service on the North Slope and elsewhere to hotel management and employee leasing services. It has substantial investments in the visitor industry.

Nonprofits represent nearly a quarter of the Trends 100

Twenty-two of the top 100 employers were nonprofit organizations in 2005 and nearly one in four jobs – 23 percent – of the state's 100 largest employers were working in the nonprofit sector. (See Exhibit 6.) The list of players

Trends 100 by Industry Employment in 2005 (Continued) **2**

	Employment
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	
Accommodation	
Alaska Hotel Properties (Princess Hotels)	515
Alyeska Resort (includes O'Malley's on the Green)	503
Westmark Hotels	401
Hotel Captain Cook	340
Hilton Anchorage	334
Food Services and Drinking Places	
NANA Management Services	1,358
McDonald's Restaurants of Alaska	790
Doyon/Universal Ogden, Joint Venture	670
ARAMARK	549
Pizza Hut	413
Denali Foods (Taco Bell)	401
Recreation	
The Alaska Club	634

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Four New Players Make the List Trends 100 **3**

	Employment
Holiday Stationstores	293
Doyon Drilling	282
Harpoon Construction Group	281
Crowley Marine	271

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

The Big Movers in 2005 Ranking up by at least 10 since 2004 **4**

	Rankings	Increase in Employment
Lowe's	71 to 42	198
ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications	62 to 37	213
QAP (formerly Quality Asphalt Paving)	90 to 69	72
Lithia Motors	82 to 62	85
Udelhoven Oilfield System Services	98 to 81	67
ARAMARK	56 to 45	120

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

5 Alaska Native Employers Employment in 2005

	Employment
ASRC Energy Services	1,506
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	1,372
NANA Management Services	1,358
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	1,200
Southcentral Foundation	1,098
SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARCH)	804
Doyon/Universal Ogden, Joint Venture	670
ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications	617
Tanana Chiefs Conference	559
Maniilaq Association	557
Peak Oilfield Services Company	471
Norton Sound Health Corporation	458
Chugach Development Corporation	451
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation	347
Doyon Drilling	282
Harpoon Construction Group	281
Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)	271

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

6 Nonprofit Organizations in 2005 Nonprofits are a fourth of Trends 100

	Employment
Providence Health System	3,685
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	1,372
Banner Health (includes Fairbanks Memorial Hospital)	1,346
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	1,200
Southcentral Foundation	1,098
Alaska USA Federal Credit Union	858
SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC)	804
Hope Community Resources	634
Tanana Chiefs Conference	559
Maniilaq Association	557
Norton Sound Health Corporation	458
Assets	391
Chugach Electric Association	366
Ketchikan General Hospital	350
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation	347
Salvation Army-Alaska	345
Access Alaska	338
Matanuska Telephone Association	318
Frontier Community Services	314
Rural Alaska Community Action Program	313
The Arc of Anchorage	306
Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)	271

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

changed very little in 2005 from 2004; the order they're ranked in changed little too.

Nonprofits play a big and growing role among Alaska's largest employers. Just five years ago, only 14 nonprofits were on the Trends 100 list. The important drivers in this growth are the privatization of public services and the growth in health care. Although a majority of the nonprofits on the top 100 list are tied to health care or social services, some represent other industries, such as the Alaska USA Federal Credit Union, and the Matanuska Telephone and Chugach Electric associations, both membership-owned utilities.

The large presence of the health care industry in the state helps explain why nonprofits are so often found on the top 100 list. In fact, many of the health-care nonprofits are either the largest or second-largest employers in their respective communities. For example, the Providence Alaska Medical Center is the largest private sector employer in Anchorage. The Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation is the largest employer in Dillingham and the Maniilaq Association is the biggest in Kotzebue. The companies' labor-intensive nature and the fact that many of these health care providers are providing services around-the-clock explain their large staff levels.

Oil, health care and seafood processing come in strong

Alaska's oil industry dominates the Trends 100 club. In 2005, the vast majority of all oil industry workers in Alaska were employed by one of the state's largest employers. (See Exhibit 2.) No other industry in the state shows such a large concentration of big players. ASRC Energy Services Pipeline, Power & Communications and Udelhoven Oilfield System Services were among the big movers in 2005.

Health care and social assistance, and seafood processing are also heavily represented on the list of Alaska's 100 largest employers. More than half the employees in these industries work for top 100 companies. The largest of the players in the health and social assistance side is Providence Health System.

Trident Seafoods, with plants around the state, is the biggest seafood processing employer. The smallest on the top 100 list is NorQuest Seafoods, now owned by Trident.

With the loss of Greens Creek Mining Company from the Trends 100 in 2005, metal mining took a hit since the only other players are the Fairbanks Gold Mining Company and Teck Cominco Alaska. Eventually there should be some rebound as Greens Creek could certainly move back onto the list and the new Teck Pogo mine near Delta, which has 250 employees, could make the top 100 list in the near future.

Although retail trade and transportation are strongly represented among Alaska's largest employers, their industry share is considerably smaller. That's because most employers in such industries as retail trade, finance, professional and business services tend to be smaller companies.

Nearly half of the top 10 were different a decade ago

Four of 2005's top 10 employers were on the top 10 list a decade ago if Carrs/Safeway is included in this lineup. (See Exhibit 7.) Nearly all the current top 10 companies were somewhere among the top 100 a decade ago and have simply grown enough to climb to their present places.

The changes in the top 10 list are representative of how Alaska's economy has evolved over the past decade. For example, none of the oil industry companies that were among the top 10 in 1995 made the top 10 in 2005, even if you allow for the change in their identities, such as ARCO's change to ConocoPhillips. With the exception of BP, many top 100 oil industry employers have lower staff levels than in 1995. BP is an exception, but that's because it acquired part of ARCO's assets. Due to these changes, along with the decade-long growth of retail and health care, the top 10 list has more retailers and health care providers and fewer oil industry players. The other big change is the presence of Native companies and organizations. In 2005, there were three in the top 10; in 1995 there were none.

Comparing the Top 10 with 10 Years Ago

A 40 percent turnover in the last decade

Top 10 Employers in 2005

Rank		Employment
1	Providence Health System	3,685
2	Carrs/Safeway	3,086
3	Fred Meyer	2,795
4	Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	2,694
5	Trident Seafoods	1,650
6	Alaska Airlines	1,515
7	ASRC Energy Services	1,506
8	Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation	1,372
9	NANA Management Services	1,358
10	Banner Health (includes Fairbanks Memorial Hospital)	1,346

Top 10 Employers in 1995

Rank		Employment
1	Carr Gottstein Foods	3,222
2	Providence Hospital	1,998
3	ARCO Alaska	1,974
4	Fred Meyer	1,781
5	VECO	1,504
6	Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	1,257
7	Alaska Airlines	1,254
8	Trident Seafoods	1,248
9	National Bank of Alaska	1,172
10	BP Exploration	1,147

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Adding in the Public Sector

The top 10 in 2005

Rank		Employment
1	Uniformed military	20,933
2	Federal civilians	17,000
3	State of Alaska	17,000
4	University of Alaska	7,200
5	Anchorage School District	6,539
6	Providence Health System	3,685
7	Carrs/Safeway	3,086
8	Municipality of Anchorage	3,013
9	Fred Meyer	2,795
10	Wal-Mart/Sam's Club	2,694

Source: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

9 The Fortune 500 Trends 100 firms on the list

Anchorage Hilton
ARAMARK
Alaska Regional Health Corporation (Alaska Regional Hospital)
ConocoPhillips
Costco
FedEx
Fred Meyer
Home Depot
JCPenney
Lowe's
McDonald's
NANA/Marriott, Joint Venture
Nordstrom
Northwest Airlines
Pizza Hut
Safeway Stores
Sears
Taco Bell
Tesoro Northstore Company
Union Oil of California (Unocal) (now Chevron)
UPS
Wal-Mart/Sam's Club
Wells Fargo

Source: Fortune Magazine

Trends 100 companies are everywhere

Although most of the top 100 employers have their headquarters or their largest work site in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, fewer than 15 of the employers are exclusively in Anchorage. For example, First National Bank Alaska maintains its headquarters in Anchorage, but it has offices in 15 Alaska communities. At least a quarter of the top 100 companies have no presence in Anchorage.

Public sector reigns when it's included

If the list of the 100 largest employers included the public sector, it would look vastly different. (See Exhibit 8.) Only four of the top 10 employers are in the private sector. By nature, public sector organizations tend to be large – even the Anchorage School District, with its 6,539 employees, has a bigger work force than any private organization in the state. It's doubtful the lineup will change much in the foreseeable future.

Many are even Fortune 500 players

Nearly a quarter of the top 100 companies are also Fortune 500 employers. Those include UPS, Wells Fargo, Home Depot and Costco – names most Alaskans can identify. (See Exhibit 9.) Only a few are not as well known, such as ARAMARK, which is in the hotel, catering and facility management business, among others.

Trends 100: A list, is a list, is a list?

By Neal Fried
Economist

There are all kinds of lists out there: to-do lists, grocery lists and lists that rank all sorts of things. The ranking style of the list has become increasingly popular as our attention span has shortened and we are overwhelmed with information. The Trends 100 list began in 1986 as the Trends 50 list – a ranking of the top 50 private sector employers – and then grew to the Trends 100 in 1989.

All lists that rank something have their weaknesses and many have their strengths. One of the strengths of the Trends 100 is that the employment numbers come straight from the quarterly employer reports of wages and employment that nearly all Alaska employers are required to submit to the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, as mandated by the state's unemployment insurance laws. It's the most comprehensive database of employers in the state.

Those that are excluded from the reporting requirement are self-employed workers, fishermen, domestic workers, unpaid family workers, nonprofit volunteers and most people working in agriculture.

To produce the Trends 100 list, a report is run against this employer database for the most current calendar year available – for this issue's Trends 100 list, it was 2005. A 12-month average is then calculated for each employer and that becomes the number reported for each employer.

That's another strength of the Trends 100: It's not based on peak employment of a particular employer, like is so often the case. There are many employers that have a large work force for two or three months a year but only a few employees for the rest of the year. Other employers have a smaller peak work force but employ more of their workers over the course of the whole year.

The 12-month average provides a common denominator for measuring the true size of the employer's work force.

The biggest shortcoming of the Trends 100, however, is there is no distinction made between part-time and full-time employment. If such a distinction could be made, it would be, but employers aren't required to report whether someone is full-time or part-time.

Another strength of the Trends 100 – although it's sometimes perceived as a weakness – is that the Department of Labor reports the companies just as the companies report themselves to the department. In most cases, it's not a problem. But in some cases, the companies may be unhappy that their subsidiaries are counted as stand-alone companies.

An example of this might be the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, an umbrella of a long list of subsidiaries – two of which are on the Trends 100 list. If all the subsidiaries of the regional corporations were combined under the regional corporations' names, most of these parent companies would show up on the list of the state's largest employers.

Seasonal employment picks up in June

According to preliminary estimates, nonfarm wage and salary employment rose by 12,400 in June to 330,300. (See Exhibit 1.) The industry sectors that contributed most to the typical seasonal increase were leisure and hospitality (4,600), seafood processing (3,900) and construction (2,400). The number of government jobs fell by 2,800 in June due to the summer break in the academic calendar for the state's university system and local elementary and secondary schools.

The state's June job count was 4,800 higher than in June 2005 for an over-the-year growth rate of 1.5 percent. The state has added jobs at an average rate of about 1.8 percent over the last five years and 2.2 percent over the 18 consecutive years of growth from 1988 through 2005. The longer-term average is higher mostly because of the high growth years of 1989 (6.2 percent) and 1990 (4.8 percent) when the state was cleaning up after the Exxon Valdez oil spill and coming out of the 1986-87 recession.

Oil and gas jobs have increased by 1,100 from June 2005 to June 2006 for a hearty growth rate of 12.9 percent. Those gains have offset slowing growth in health care and construction, two industries that have led the way in job creation for most of the last decade. Both retail trade and food services and drinking places employment were up 700 jobs over the year. State and local government added 600 and 400 jobs, respectively, while the federal government cut 300.

Oil industry activity pushed the Northern region's June over-the-year growth rate to 6.6 percent, easily the highest in the state. (See Exhibit 3.) The Anchorage/Mat-Su region continued to grow at a slightly higher rate than the state as a whole, adding 3,200 jobs from June 2005 to June 2006 for a growth rate of 1.9 percent. The Interior, Southeast and Gulf Coast regions all added a moderate to small number of jobs, and the Southwest region equaled its June 2005 job count.

Earnings up 2.8 percent in 2005

Data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages show that average annual earnings per job increased 2.8 percent in 2005 to \$39,708. The increase didn't quite keep pace with 2005's 3.1 percent inflation rate, as measured by the Anchorage Consumer Price Index.

Unemployment rate falls to 6.7 percent

Alaska's unemployment rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point in June to 6.7 percent (see Exhibit 2), an uncharacteristic drop in a month that usually sees small increases due to the summer break for schools and universities and an influx of new job seekers into the labor market. The unusual decline may be due to slight changes to school districts' academic calendars and the timing of the monthly household survey on which the data are based.

The Wade Hampton Census Area had the state's highest unemployment rate in June at 25.4 percent and the Denali Borough had the lowest at 2.9 percent.

1 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

Alaska	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes from:	
	6/06	5/06	6/05	5/06	6/05
Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary¹	330,300	317,900	325,500	12,400	4,800
Goods-Producing ²	47,900	41,200	46,200	6,700	1,700
Service-Providing ³	282,400	276,700	279,300	5,700	3,100
Natural Resources and Mining	11,900	11,700	10,800	200	1,100
Logging	500	500	600	0	-100
Mining	11,500	11,300	10,200	200	1,300
Oil and Gas	9,600	9,400	8,500	200	1,100
Construction	21,600	19,200	21,200	2,400	400
Manufacturing	14,400	10,300	14,200	4,100	200
Wood Product Manufacturing	400	300	400	100	0
Seafood Processing	10,200	6,300	10,100	3,900	100
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	67,900	66,000	67,000	1,900	900
Wholesale Trade	6,600	6,500	6,500	100	100
Retail Trade	38,300	37,100	37,600	1,200	700
Food and Beverage Stores	6,700	6,400	6,600	300	100
General Merchandise Stores	9,500	9,200	9,200	300	300
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	23,000	22,400	22,900	600	100
Air Transportation	6,600	6,300	6,600	300	0
Truck Transportation	3,400	3,200	3,300	200	100
Information	7,000	6,900	7,000	100	0
Telecommunications	4,200	4,100	4,200	100	0
Financial Activities	15,300	14,800	15,100	500	200
Professional and Business Services	25,600	24,300	25,500	1,300	100
Educational⁴ and Health Services	36,500	36,400	36,100	100	400
Health Care	26,600	26,300	26,100	300	500
Leisure and Hospitality	37,400	32,800	36,700	4,600	700
Accommodations	10,600	8,600	10,600	2,000	0
Food Services and Drinking Places	21,800	19,700	21,100	2,100	700
Other Services	11,600	11,600	11,500	0	100
Government	81,100	83,900	80,400	-2,800	700
Federal Government ⁵	17,400	16,900	17,700	500	-300
State Government	24,000	24,900	23,400	-900	600
State Government Education ⁶	5,600	7,500	5,700	-1,900	-100
Local Government	39,700	42,100	39,300	-2,400	400
Local Government Education ⁷	21,400	24,100	21,000	-2,700	400
Tribal Government	4,100	3,800	4,100	300	0

Notes for all exhibits on this page:

- ¹ Excludes self-employed workers, fishermen, domestic workers, unpaid family workers and nonprofit volunteers
- ² Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.
- ³ Service-providing sectors include all others not listed as goods-producing sectors.
- ⁴ Private education only
- ⁵ Excludes uniformed military
- ⁶ Includes the University of Alaska
- ⁷ Includes public school systems
- ⁸ Metropolitan Statistical Area

Sources for all exhibits on this page: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

3 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment By Region

	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes from:		Percent Change:	
	6/06	5/06	6/05	5/06	6/05	5/06	6/05
Anch/Mat-Su (MSA) ⁸	172,100	168,300	168,900	3,800	3,200	2.3%	1.9%
Anchorage	152,900	150,200	150,400	2,700	2,500	1.8%	1.7%
Gulf Coast	31,900	29,150	31,700	2,750	200	9.4%	0.6%
Interior	49,200	47,700	48,500	1,500	700	3.1%	1.4%
Fairbanks	39,700	39,000	39,400	700	300	1.8%	0.8%
Northern	16,900	16,600	15,850	300	1,050	1.8%	6.6%
Southeast	40,500	38,600	40,200	1,900	300	4.9%	0.7%
Southwest	20,200	17,650	20,200	2,550	0	14.4%	0.0%

2 Unemployment Rates By borough and census area

	Prelim.	Revised	Revised
	6/06	5/06	6/05
NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
United States	4.8	4.4	5.2
Alaska Statewide	6.7	6.9	6.7
Anchorage/Mat-Su (MSA)⁸	5.8	5.9	5.8
Municipality of Anchorage	5.6	5.6	5.6
Mat-Su Borough	6.8	7.2	6.7
Gulf Coast Region	7.9	8.4	7.8
Kenai Peninsula Borough	7.2	8.0	7.5
Kodiak Island Borough	11.7	10.3	9.0
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	6.9	8.7	7.6
Interior Region	6.3	6.5	6.2
Denali Borough	2.9	4.3	2.5
Fairbanks North Star Borough (MSA) ⁸	5.9	5.8	5.9
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	8.6	9.4	8.9
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	12.5	13.2	11.4
Northern Region	11.9	11.2	12.6
Nome Census Area	14.0	13.2	13.2
North Slope Borough	9.1	8.6	10.7
Northwest Arctic Borough	12.6	12.0	14.0
Southeast Region	6.0	6.3	6.3
Haines Borough	5.9	7.4	6.6
Juneau Borough	4.9	4.7	5.3
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	5.5	5.9	5.9
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan CA	12.6	12.9	11.7
Sitka Borough	5.0	5.5	5.2
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	7.8	9.9	7.4
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	8.8	9.5	9.4
Yakutat Borough	5.8	7.6	6.4
Southwest Region	12.7	14.0	12.6
Aleutians East Borough	8.9	12.3	11.0
Aleutians West Census Area	6.8	10.7	6.9
Bethel Census Area	14.9	15.1	14.2
Bristol Bay Borough	4.8	7.0	3.6
Dillingham Census Area	10.9	11.8	11.1
Lake and Peninsula Borough	4.5	5.7	6.4
Wade Hampton Census Area	25.4	22.6	25.3
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED			
United States	4.6	4.6	5.0
Alaska Statewide	6.6	7.1	6.6

For more current state and regional employment and unemployment data, visit our Web site.

almis.labor.state.ak.us

A whole new way to match people and their skills to jobs

Vaosa “Val” Tuiolemotu needed a job, so she went to Anchorage’s Gambell Job Center to talk to James Demers, an employment specialist there. She’d said she’d always connect with him or his colleague when she was between jobs, looking for work. She had learned a lot from him over the years about job searches and job training. This time he showed her something new: ALEXsys.

She said in the past she’d get to the job center about 8 a.m. and work till about 2 p.m., working at the center’s computers, combing through job listings and re-working her resumé. But this time, once Demers explained what ALEXsys was (a new labor exchange system) and how to begin, she just started answering questions on the computer screen, then even did an online resumé. It took about an hour or so.

Two hours later, she looked up her ALEXsys file from her computer at home. Four companies – Alaska First Trust, First National Bank Alaska, FedEx and Northrim Bank – had already looked at her resumé. That got her excited. She started looking around in the system and saw a job for a field sales representative at a cell phone sales company. She called, got an

interview for the next day and the following day she got the job.

A single mom with five kids age 8 and younger, Tuiolemotu had worked her way up from a teller to a fraud investigator in two years at First National Bank Alaska, but took off 1 ½ years when she had her fifth child. In mid-July she’d worked her first six days for Statewide Sales/Wilson Group, making \$14 an hour plus commissions. She said Demers always seems to bring her good luck and ALEXsys was a breeze – she loves it.

Tom Nelson, the director of the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development’s Employment Security Division, said the \$4 million ALEXsys project marks a new era in Alaska for employers who want workers and people who want jobs.

The department first opened the online system to Alaska job seekers April 17 and to employers May 1. By mid-July, 29,125 job seekers and 2,552 employers had registered on the system; there had been 9,265 job orders for 15,806 job openings, not including the some 300 State of Alaska openings added to the system in early July. There were 2,900 active job orders as of July 14, said James Harvey, an ESD analyst and acting regional and Juneau Job Center manager.

“We were quite excited,” Nelson said, about the sheer numbers of people getting on the system. “We did more labor exchange business in two months than we normally would have in

Anchorage’s Midtown Job Center on “opening day” (April 17) – the first day job seekers could get on the new ALEXsys system. Job center employees (standing, from left to right) Jon Glazner, Raul Gonzalez and Kenji Dash stand by to help job seekers if they have questions. Job seeker Fred Don is sitting (second from the bottom); the names of the others are unknown. Out of the 126 job seekers at the job center that day, 89 registered on ALEXsys, said Kim Harness, the job center’s manager.



Photo by Kaylene Johnson, Alaska Works Partnership Inc.

four months last year, before ALEXsys," he said. Before the new system, the state's job centers helped 12 percent of the state's employers find workers; now, with ALEXsys, they reach 20 percent, he said.

Nelson said the department needed to reduce its reliance on "antiquated" and costly mainframe technologies.

"ALEXsys is Web-based rather than mainframe-based," Nelson said. "It's just like other electronic labor exchange systems, such as Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com. This is not brand new. [But] it's new for our state.

"We're finally getting with the program and modernizing," he said. "Actually it's better than Monster.com because employers don't pay for it. It's free for them. It's an additional benefit from their [unemployment] taxes."

A big thing that sets ALEXsys apart from the department's former system, Alaska's Job Bank, and even the current national system, America's Job Bank,¹ is that instead of using job titles to match job seekers to jobs, it does the match based on skills – the job seeker's skills and the skills that the employer says he or she wants, said Carol Collins, an ESD program specialist who's helped market ALEXsys.

It's a tremendous system, said Susan Brenner, an ESD analyst who oversaw the ALEXsys training for 235 job center employees. They went through four-day intensive training sessions in February and March, then had a half-day refresher in April. Many of the 235 have gone on to train partner agency staff, as well as Native regional corporations and other groups. They, along with the 235, will then show employers and job seekers how to use ALEXsys.

"I can't say enough about this system. I've been working with it a year," Brenner said. "It's a dynamic system. I wish everybody would explore all the things the system can do for them."

¹ America's Job Bank will be phased out in the end of 2007; all states are being required to develop their own systems by then, Nelson said.

Employers can post their jobs online, then view the resumé of Alaskans that match their needs. They can use a "virtual recruiter" to create and store automatic resumé searches or to email them when someone posts a resumé with skills that match the skills they're looking for.

Employers can look at resumé according to where the job seekers want to work – whether it's statewide or in a certain region or city – or by the occupation the job seekers say they're looking for. They can even search for someone who has 25 percent, 50 percent or 75 percent of the skills they're looking for, Brenner said.

Job seekers can search and apply for jobs online, write their resumé and post them for employers to see, create and store automatic job searches and alert them to job openings, identify and match relevant skills to job openings, find training for the skills they need or even send out letters through ALEXsys, according to handouts about the system.

Aside from searching for jobs by the skills it takes to do them, Brenner said job seekers can search a host of ways: by keyword, employer, a specific occupation, occupational category or industry code; by a special category, such as all jobs working with youth, those with day shifts, on-the-job training or whether they're seasonal; or even by the certain percentages of skills. With an advanced search, they can find all the jobs with a certain education requirement or at a certain salary, she said.

The department started with focus groups in 2002 to find out what Alaska employers wanted from the state's job centers. Deputy ESD Director Pat Shier said he's also talked to employers all over the state. "Far and away, they say the single biggest challenge is finding someone qualified for the job," Shier said.

What about job seekers? Nelson said over the years, they've criticized Alaska's Job Bank as having only minimum wage jobs. ALEXsys has just about every type of job listed, including those with the highest pay scale, such as doctors, engineers and attorneys, he said.

The Alaska Legislature in 2003 gave the department authority to spend \$3.5 million on ALEXsys – money that the state received from the occasional distribution of the federal unemployment trust fund, which is fed by the \$56 a year employers pay per employee in FUTA taxes required by the Federal Unemployment Tax Act of 1937. Another \$500,000 came from an annual federal grant for job centers, Nelson said.

The department used \$1.5 million to buy ALEXsys as an off-the-shelf program and the software rights to manipulate the actual code. Other states have bought the same program, he said, but no other states own the software rights.

“Then we ‘Alaskanized’ it. We made it meet our needs,” Nelson said, by connecting it to Alaska labor market information data generated by the department’s Research and Analysis Section and the department’s unemployment insurance system within the Employment Security Division.

For the roughly 65,000 Alaskans who get weekly unemployment insurance benefits each year, depending on the basis of their claim, they may be required to register for ALEXsys and post a resumé to continue the benefits, Nelson said. It’s all on a case-by-case basis. For example, if a construction union member is out of work but he or she has an expectation of returning to work, he or she doesn’t have to register for the program, he said.

Collins said ESD is actively campaigning through direct mailings to tell the state’s unemployment insurance benefit recipients, job seekers and employers about ALEXsys.

Altogether, about eight computer programmers with the department and four with a private contractor have been working full-time on ALEXsys since early 2005 (four of them worked on it for part of 2004). The majority of the programmers will finish in the end of July, said Joyce Douglas, a DOL Data Processing Section project manager. Four ESD business analysts and 16 testers – job center employees – worked on the computer side from about November 2005 to last April, she said.

After purchasing ALEXsys, the remaining \$2.5 million paid for the programmers, other software and for training the 235 job center employees and others. Now it’ll likely take \$300,000 a year for maintaining the system and making small improvements, Nelson said.

He said a critical part of having ALEXsys is that it frees up job center employees so they can do more intensive work, which ranges from helping laid-off workers get new job skills to holding job fairs and doing one-on-one mock job interviews.

The ESD’s Shier said people love the fact that since ALEXsys is Web-based, they can post a job order or their resumé in the middle of the night if they want to and it makes hiring a whole lot easier for all employers, especially the 75 percent of Alaska employers with less than 10 employees.

Nelson said that ALEXsys brings a refreshing change.

“Our department has had the reputation of being an unemployment insurance building and nothing more,” for the last 10 years, he said.

“We introduced the ‘Jobs’ logo in 1999 and we’ve revised it since then,” Nelson said, and have now added ALEXsys. “We’ve got branding, finally, so people are recognizing us as the jobs place.”

□ □ □

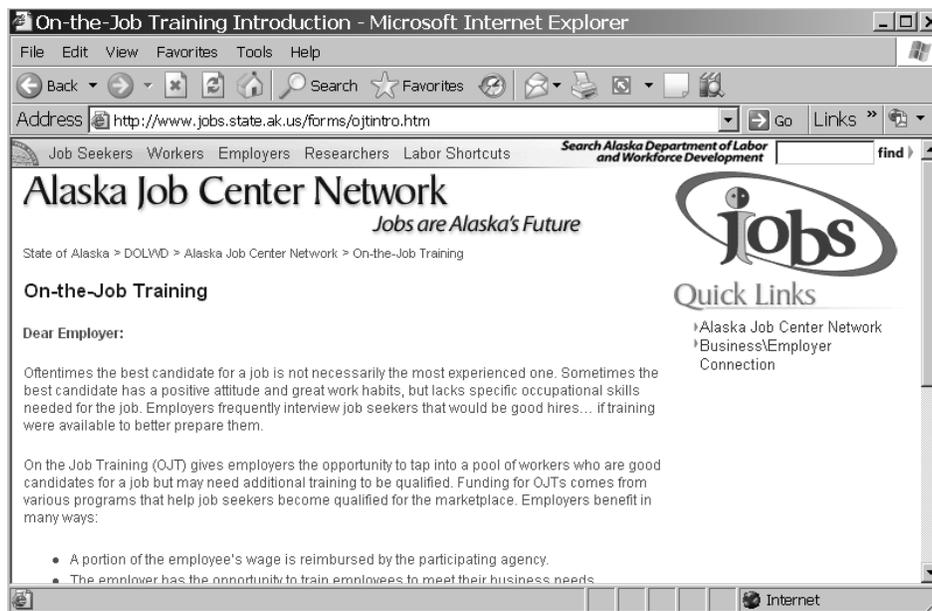
Employers and job seekers can access ALEXsys on the Internet by going to www.jobs.state.ak.us. For questions or more information, call or stop by any job center, or employers can call (877) 465-5934 and job seekers can call (877) 724-ALEX (2539). The job centers also hold at least weekly ALEXsys orientation sessions. Employers without Web access can call, fax or email their job orders into the nearest job center, as they’ve done in the past. Job center employees will then input the job orders on ALEXsys and post them on America’s Job Bank. The state’s job centers are open Monday through Friday, either from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Employer Resources

On-the-Job Training Programs

Often the best candidate for a job is not necessarily the most experienced one. Sometimes the best candidate has a positive attitude and great work habits, but lacks specific occupational skills needed for the job. The Alaska Job Center's on-the-job training program gives employers the chance to hire a worker and get a portion of that employee's wages reimbursed by the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development or other participating agency. That way they can train the employee to meet their needs.

For more information, go to www.jobs.state.ak.us/forms/ojintro.htm or contact your nearest job center.



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